REMARKS

The present invention relates to a time-stamping protocol for time-stamping digital documents. A document originator creates a time stamp receipt by combining a document or identifying data associated with the document (e.g., a unique hash value), and a time indication. The document originator forwards the time stamp receipt to a trusted outside agency (e.g., a time-stamping authority – TSA) for validation. If valid, the TSA computes an age value by determining the difference between the time indication in the time stamp receipt and the time obtained from a trusted clock. The TSA then combines the age value with the identifying data and the time indication to create an aged time stamp receipt. After creating the aged time stamp receipt, the TSA cryptographically binds both the received time indication and the computed age value with the document or identifying data using, for example, a private key. A copy of the bound time stamp receipt is then sent to the document originator, and may later be used to verify the document.

Applicant respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haber et. al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,136,647) in view of the article to Takura. Claim 1 explicitly requires, "receiving a time stamp receipt at an outside agency, said time stamp receipt including identifying data associated with said document and a time indication." Thus, the document originator transmits *both* the identifying data and the time indication to the outside agency. Haber does not teach or suggest that the of the trusted agency receives a time indication with the request. In contrast, Haber teaches that the TSA independently creates the time indication after receiving the request from the author. *Haber*, col. 4, ll. 6-11. Whatever information is sent to the TSA by the author does not include a time indication. Moreover, Takura does nothing to rectify this deficiency. In Takura, a client (i.e., the originator) sends a time stamping request to a server at the TSA. Like Haber, the request does not include a time indication. Instead, Takura teaches that the server receiving the request returns a message to

the client that identifies the time at which the server received the request. *Takura*, pg. 88, col. 1, ¶3.

Therefore, both Haber and Takura fail to teach or suggest, alone or in combination, "receiving a time stamp receipt . . . including a time indication." As a result, both references necessarily fail to teach or suggest the requisite, "computing the age of time stamp receipt . . . [and] . . . creating an aged time stamp receipt" based on a received time indication. Accordingly, the § 103(a) rejection fails, and Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claim 1, and its dependent claims 2-13.

The Examiner also rejected claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haber in view of Takura, citing similar reasons for the rejection. However, claim 14 requires "creating a time stamp receipt including identifying data associated with said document and a time indication . . . [and] . . . transmitting said time stamp receipt [including the time indication] to an outside agency for certification." For the reasons stated above, both Haber and Takura fail to teach or suggest, alone or in combination, that the originator transmits a time indication with the request. Therefore, the § 103 rejection to claim 14 necessarily fails, and Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claim 14, and its dependent claims 15-26.

Respectfully submitted,

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